

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2774

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PINT, PO
SUBJECT: PSD MODERATES CONTEMPLATE NEXT STEPS

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SUMMARY: PSD MODERATE LEADERS SOUSA FRANCO AND SERVULO
CORREIA SEEM RESIGNED TO A SA CARNEIRO TAKEOVER OF THE
PARTY. THE MODERATES, HOWEVER, INTEND TO STAND FIRM IN
THE LEGISLATURE WHERE THEY HAVE A SOLID MAJORITY OF THE
73 PSD SEATS. END SUMMARY.

1. MEASURED PESSIMISM FROM PSD MODERATES: IN SEPARATE
CONVERSATIONS APRIL 11 WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND THE POLITICAL
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COUNSELOR, PSD POLITICAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SOUSA
FRANCO AND PARTY SECRETARY-GENERAL SERVULO CORREIA
DISCUSSED THEIR CURRENT STRUGGLE WITH FORMER PSD LEADER
SA CARNEIRO. SOUSA FRANCO, IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE
AMBASSADOR, ESTIMATED PROSPECTS OF PARTY MODERATES COMING OUT
ON TOP AT THIS WEEKEND'S NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING AS
BEING "FAIR." HE SAID SA CARNEIRO, PERSONALLY, HAD NO

REAL INTEREST IN TAKING OVER THE PARTY AT THIS TIME. HE WOULD PREFER TO WAIT ON THE OUTSIDE AND COME BACK IN TRIUMPH AT A PARTY CONGRESS AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

2. PREEMPTIVE CAPITULATION: SERVULO CORREIA WAS BOTH MORE PESSIMISTIC AND PRECISE IN HIS DESCRIPTION OF WHAT COMES NEXT. HE SAID THAT IN THE FACE OF DEMONSTRATED SA CARNEIRO STRENGTH THE MODERATES WERE PREPARED TO MAKE A TACTICAL RETREAT. CORREIA THOUGH THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE'S RESIGNATION WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL. AN INTERIM STEERING COMMITTEE WOULD THEN BE NAMED, DOMINATED BY SA CARNEIRO SUPPORTERS WITH PERHAPS A FEW HOLDOVERS FROM THE CURRENT POLITICAL COMMITTEE FOR COSMETICS. SA CARNEIRO, FOR TACTICAL REASONS, MIGHT RESIGN FROM THE PARTY BUT WOULD CONTINUE TO PULL THE STRINGS. A PARTY CONGRESS WOULD BE SET FOR THE FALL. SERVULO CORREIA SAID THE MODERATES' DECISION NOT TO STAND AND FIGHT WAS BASED UPON TWO ASSUMPTIONS:

--THEY KNEW THEY COULD NOT WIN IF SA CARNEIRO CARRIED THE DISPUTE TO THE NATIONAL CONGRESS.

--THE WERE REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT SA CARNEIRO SUPPORTERS WOULD SO MISMANAGE PARTY AFFAIRS DURING THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS THAT THE MODERATES COULD MAKE A STRONG COMBACK BY THE TIME OF THE NUVVWFJRP :94438- -8\$, THE MODERATES INTENDED TO TIGHTEN IT OUT IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. THEY WERE IN CONFIDENTIAL

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FIRM CONTROL OF THE PSD PARLIAMENTARY GROUP. SA CARNEIRO HAD ONLY TEN "UNCONDITIONAL" SUPPORTERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY; ANOTHER DOZEN OR SO MIGHT FOLLOW THEIR LEAD. THE MAXIMUM NUMBER SA CARNEIRO COULD COUNT ON, HOWEVER, WOULD BE 25 OF THE 73 MEMBERS OF THE PSD PARLIAMENTARY GROUP.

3. STANDING TRUTH ON ITS HEAD: SA CARNEIRO, CORREIA SAID, WAS THE PURE DEMAGOGUE, INTERESTED IN POWER AT ANY COST. OUTSIDE THE PARTY HE WOULD BE THE RALLYING POINT FOR RIGHTWING REVANCHIST SENTIMENT. THE STOCK IN TRADE OF HIS DIE-HARD SUPPORTERS HAD BECOME CALUMNY AND INNUENDO. THE RECENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE PRESIDENT WAS A PRIME EXAMPLE. TO UNDERSCORE THE POINT, CORREIA PULLED OUT A XEROX COPY OF AN ARTICLE FROM THE APRIL 7 EDITION OF "COMMERCIO DO PORTO" ASSERTING THAT HE, RUI MACHETE, AND MAGALHAES MOTA WERE BEHIND EFFORTS TO DIVIDE THE PSD, AND DESTROY DEMOCRACY.

4. COMMENT: IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER SA CARNEIRO RUN AT POWER, THE PSD MODERATES HAVE REVERTED TO THEIR FAMILIAR DEFENSIVE STRATEGY. BOTH SOUSA FRANCO AND SERVULO CORREIA

SEEM RESIGNED TO A SA CARNEIRO TAKEOVER OF THE PARTY
AT LEAST IN THE SHORT-RUN. THE MODERAES ARE BANKING ON
SA CARNEIRO AND HIS SUPPORTERS PUNCHING THEMSELVES OUT.
BUT AS MUHAMMED ALI COULD TELL HIM, THE STRATEGY DOES NOT
ALWAYS WORK.
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